

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-3102**

August 3, 2021

The Honorable Michelle Lujan Grisham  
Governor of New Mexico  
490 Old Santa Fe Trail #400  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Governor Grisham,

We write to call on you to deploy the New Mexico National Guard to the southern border. Their presence is essential to confront the current crisis at our border and help reduce the transmission of COVID-19 from migrants entering our country. We are disappointed that you are placing mask mandates not supported by science on children at school and further restricting businesses while simultaneously leaving New Mexicans unprotected from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic south of our border.

In your previous response to Representative Herrell's April letter, you said the New Mexico National Guard was too busy to help with the crisis at the border because it was administering COVID-19 vaccines and helping to fulfill the states logistical response to the pandemic. This occurred while New Mexican Guardsmen sat in the Capitol in Washington D.C. for months for a largely partisan exercise. It is also now true that everyone in New Mexico that wants a vaccine has access to one in our state and the New Mexican Guard's role in vaccinations has ended. There is no greater threat to the spread of coronavirus than those unvaccinated and untested illegal immigrants that are crossing our border and entering into our communities and spreading the virus to our citizens.

Over 1.1 million illegal immigrants have been encountered this fiscal year, with 822,680 illegally entering our country under President Biden.<sup>1</sup> In June, 188,829 illegal immigrants were encountered by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.<sup>2</sup> According to the Border Patrol, this does not include at least 270,000 illegal immigrants that have eluded the Border Patrol and entered our nation.<sup>3</sup> Our nation is on pace for over 2 million illegal immigrants to enter our country in a year, nearly the population of the entire State of New Mexico. We have no idea of these illegal

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<sup>1</sup> CBP, Southwest Land Border Encounters, <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-land-border-encounters>.

<sup>2</sup> CBP, Southwest Land Border Encounters, <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-land-border-encounters>.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Dinan, "Ballooning number of 'gotaways' poses public safety, national security risk," *The Washington Examiner*, July 23, 2021, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/jul/23/gotaways-illegal-immigrant-spike-poses-public-safe/>.

immigrants' criminal history, health history, or infection status. However, it is clear many infected with COVID-19 are pouring across our border. According to media reports, in the Rio Grande Valley Sector the rate of illegal immigrants in custody testing positive has increased by 900 percent in the first two weeks of July.<sup>4</sup> Similar numbers are likely being experienced in the El Paso Sector, which encompasses all of New Mexico. This is a clear and present threat to our citizens, our recovery, and our return to normal. You must act to stop this illegal influx.

As you know, the Biden administration is not adhering to Title 42 guidelines meant to prevent COVID-infected or potentially exposed migrants from entering the country. They exempted numerous demographic groups from expulsion under Title 42, releasing them into the interior. This defies the science. Additionally, the Biden administration maintains cross border travel restrictions for land ports of entry while allowing air travel and illegals in unprecedented numbers to stream across the border, similarly contrary to logic and science. Given the massive surge of migrants we are seeing at the border, there is a high probability that a large number may be infected with the virus. In your previous response to Representative Herrell, you said this was a federal issue. With all due respect, the border crisis is gravely affecting New Mexicans and you have a duty to protect them when the federal government and President Joe Biden have proven themselves to be derelict in acting.

It is important to note that there is ample New Mexican National Guard manpower that can be deployed to the border. It is possible to protect our border and national security, while vaccinating our citizens at the same time. As you know, the New Mexican National Guard's vaccination mission ended as of July 30, 2021, freeing additional Guardsmen to help at our southern border.<sup>5</sup> The National Guard in Texas and Arizona are serving as vital components of gaining situational awareness and control of our border and stopping the illegal flow of people and drugs. It is lamentable that you will not help prevent further COVID-19 infections from illegal immigrants nor stop the deaths of thousands of Americans from drugs that are flowing across our border.

Groups of unaccompanied children, family units, and single adults are crossing into New Mexico every day. This daily activity is endangering and putting a greater strain on border communities. We call on you to visit the border in Luna and Hidalgo Counties with Representative Herrell. You will see how this situation is affecting our farmers, ranchers, and ordinary citizens and understand that this affects all Americans. Your disinterest in the border crisis, supporting border communities, or even visiting the border is disheartening.

The situation is dire, and the Biden administration continues to ignore the crisis they have created. States must step up to the plate and do what the Biden administration will not and supplement the existing federal resources at the border. Instead of placing unscientific mandates

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<sup>4</sup> Griff Jenkins, Adam Shaw, "COVID cases among migrants in Rio Grande Valley sector surge 900% as border numbers continue to rise, *Fox News*, July 20, 2021, <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/covid-cases-migrants-rio-grande-valley-sector-border-numbers>.

<sup>5</sup> Staff email with New Mexico National Guard.





and restrictions on New Mexicans, we ask you to work to blunt the surge at our border that shows no end in sight. A deterrent to making the dangerous journey to our southern border from Central America and Mexico must be put in place, so we ask that you deploy the New Mexico National Guard to help deal with this growing humanitarian, health, and national security catastrophe.


Sincerely,

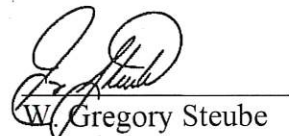
  
Yvette Herrell  
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Member of Congress

  
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